

DE-ICING MATERIALS AND ALTERNATIVES:

Common de-icers such as urea, potassium nitrate (KNO₃), rock salt, table salt (NaCl), and baking soda are cheap and do a good job of melting ice. But when the snow melts and rain falls in the spring, the salts and nitrates in them quickly run off the streets and sidewalks where they kill soil life, grass, trees and other plants they come in contact with. Eventually these pollutants run off into the nearest waterway where they kill frogs, fish and other aquatic life.

Common de-icing salts are also notorious for tearing up or burning the paws of dogs and cats who walk on them, for affecting children who play in snow and ice that has been treated with them, and for causing corrosion on driveways, walkways, vehicles and roadway structures.

So, what can you do to protect your driveways, walkways, lawns and gardens while also protecting pets and our waterways? First, prevention is better than the cure in this case. So, shoveling snow from paths as soon as it's fallen can greatly decrease ice build-up. So, if you're up to a bit of physical effort, it's another way you can exercise for the environment.

However, sometimes ice cannot be prevented, so here are some environmentally-friendly de-icing alternatives:

Organic Salt-free Deicer

It's a little pricier than salt, but these products will help to keep your walkways and driveways ice-free. These products are generally labeled as "pet-safe" and are made from **calcium magnesium acetate (CMA)**, **potassium chloride (KCl)**, or **calcium chloride (CaCl₂)**. When these non-toxic de-icing products run off with the snowmelt, the minerals they contain can actually *fertilize* the plants they come into contact with.

Some of these products can be applied right before a snowstorm to help prevent the build-up of ice and snow. And they are non-toxic and non-corrosive, so they won't harm people, pets or property. Add a little sugar to them, and they'll work even better!

Pickle Brine

The brine from pickling helps to melt ice and snow. National Geographic claims it is better for the environment than salt, as it prevents ice from sticking to the road which makes it easier to remove. Pickle brine use means that 4 to 29 percent less chlorine is added to our waterways.

Sugar Beet Juice

The juice from sugar beets lowers the melting point of ice and snow which helps to clear your driveway. It's even been used to melt ice and snow on municipal roads in some areas. It's safe for animals, people, metals, concrete and plants.

White Vinegar and Water Window De-icer

Please follow the tips below to make a homemade automobile window de-icer:

- 3 cups white vinegar
- 1 cup lukewarm water

1. Mix 3 cups of white vinegar and 1 cup of lukewarm water in a bowl or pot.
2. Stir the mixture with a spoon and use a funnel to fill a spray bottle with the solution.
3. Liberally spray the vinegar and water solution on to your car's windshields, side windows and outer mirrors before you go to bed. The vinegar and water solution will help keep ice from forming on your car's windshield overnight, even if they get covered with snow.

Rubbing Alcohol Deicer

Mix a tablespoon of rubbing alcohol, a quart of water, and a drop dishwashing liquid. Increase alcohol levels for a more rapid effect.

For keeping your car's windscreen free of ice, fill your windshield wiper tank with a mix of one part water and two parts vinegar and use the mix prior to leaving your vehicle for the night ó this should help prevent ice build up.

Regardless of what you using for de-icing, bear in mind that more is not necessarily better (except in the case of shoveling I guess), so always follow the manufacturers guidelines for any product you use in order to minimize environmental damage

GREEN TIPS FOR YOUR SUPER BOWL PARTY:

How can you do your part? If you're hosting a party for the big game, help green the event by making your gathering as eco-friendly as possible. To help you do so, we've put together a list of eight simple tips for planning your green Super Bowl party.

1. Green your TV

Having a group of people watch a game together does save some energy, since only one TV will be on instead of many. Still, most people want to see a football game on a big screen. If you're considering buying a new TV for your party, choose an energy-efficient model. Many televisions are [Energy Star certified](#), and on average these models are 25 percent more energy efficient than other models. If you do choose to buy a new TV, be sure to donate or recycle your old one. The EPA offers [suggestions](#) for where to do this, or you can search for local options at [Earth911](#).

2. Make food at home

Grocery store party platters and takeout can be tempting for options when hosting a party, but oftentimes these come with a lot of packaging. [Pizza boxes](#) especially can pose a recycling dilemma; if they have any grease or food residue on them, they can't be recycled. Consider seeking out some party food recipes that are easy to make ahead of time, like this list of [vegetarian options](#). This can take a lot of packaging waste out of the equation, and if you buy ingredients in bulk, you can reduce packaging even more (and save money!).

3. Buy the greenest beverages

You can green the beverages at your Super Bowl party by making a couple of wise selections. First, buy in bulk; a two-liter bottle of soda yields fewer bottles and cans to deal with and often costs less, too. If you do opt for individually packaged drinks, select easy-to-recycle containers like cans that your guests are used to putting in the recycling bin. Second, if there are local

breweries in your area, try these brews. They have smaller carbon footprints because they haven't traveled long distances. Some breweries also have [green practices](#), so do a little research about beverage brands if you're interested in supporting green businesses.

4. Opt for reusables

Disposable dinnerware may be the quickest to clean up after a party, but sending bags of trash to the landfill isn't ideal for any party. Instead, try using your own plates and cups, or if you don't have enough for a large group, ask friends to pitch in and bring their own. If you're worried about cups and glasses getting mixed up, try out one of Apartment Therapy's handy suggestions for [how to mark drink containers](#).

5. Make decorations yourself

Instead of buying one-time-use decorations for your party, go the DIY route. You might even be able to reuse materials you have lying around the house. Some suggestions for repurposed decorations include [football-themed silverware holders](#) made from tomato or coffee cans and [noise makers](#) for the kids made from plastic bottles. You can also [turn your table into a football field](#) using just some white tape, no special tablecloth needed.

6. Have clear recycling guidelines

One of the main reasons people don't recycle on their own is because it's inconvenient, so a simple way to ensure recyclables don't end up in the trash at your gathering is to plan ahead. Have a [designated place to recycle](#) with clearly labeled trash and recycling bins. This way everyone will be able to focus on the game and not what to do with their empty soda cans and beer bottles.

7. Don't waste leftovers